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NEWS RELEASE (amended)

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Bankruptcy Filings Down in 2004

Bankruptcy cases filed in Western Washington fell 3.74 percent for the calendar year ending December 31, 2004. This ends three consecutive years of record high filings. Bankruptcy cases totaled 28,959 according to data released today by the Office of the Clerk. The slight decline in Western Washington is consistent with the trend in bankruptcy filings nationally. Despite the drop in filings, bankruptcies remain near a historic high, both locally and nationally.

Business and Non-Business Filings

Business filings in CY 2004 totaled 430, down 10.23 percent from the 479 cases filed in CY 2003. Non-business or personal bankruptcies fell 3.63 percent, totaling 28,529 in CY 2004.

Business and Non-Business Filings

Years Ended December 31, 2000-2004

CY	Business	Non-Business	TOTAL
2004	430	28,529	28,959
2003	479	29,604	30,083
2002	459	28,421	28,880
2001	311	26,676	26,987
2000	320	22,445	22,765

Filings Decline Under All Chapters

There were fewer bankruptcy cases filed under chapters 7, 11 and 13 of the Bankruptcy Code. There were no chapter 12 cases filed in CY 2003 or 2004.

- Chapter 7 is designed to allow individuals to keep certain exempt property while the remaining

property is sold to repay creditors. Chapter 7 filings in CY 2004 totaled 23,402, down 4.08 percent from CY 2003 totals.

- Chapter 11 filings totaled 107 in CY 2004, down 29.61 percent from the 152 Chapter 11 bankruptcies filed in CY 2003. This is the fewest number of chapter 11 cases filed in Western Washington since before 1980. Chapter 11 provides for a business to continue operations while formulating a plan to repay its creditors.
- Under Chapter 13 bankruptcy, creditors may be repaid in installments, in full or in part, over a 3-5 year period. Filings under Chapter 13 in CY 2004 fell 1.5 percent from 5,533 filings in CY 2003 to 5,450 in CY 2004.
- Chapter 12 is designed to meet the needs of financially distressed family farmers. Historically, there have been very few Chapter 12 cases filed in Western Washington. As was the case in CY 2003, there were no Chapter 12 cases filed in CY 2004.

The Western Washington bankruptcy court ranks 15th largest in the country (of 94 bankruptcy courts) as measured by total annual filings. The court employs 5 full-time judges and about 90 support staff, which is the same number of judges and about the same number of support staff as in 1994 when filings were less than half of the current total. In CY 2004, the overall number of court staff declined by six full-time positions due to retirements and attrition.

For more information on bankruptcy, or for information on how to access images of case documents via the Internet, please visit the court's website at www.wawb.uscourts.gov. A breakdown of ten years of data on bankruptcy filings in Western Washington follows.

**Bankruptcy Filings
by Chapter of the Bankruptcy Code
Years Ended December 31, 2000-2004**

Year	Chapter			
	7	11	12	13
2004	23,402	107	0	5,450
2003	24,398	152	0	5,533
2002	23,397	182	2	5,299
2001	21,850	157	1	4,979
2000	17,665	172	6	4,922

Annual Bankruptcy Filings by Chapter
Years Ended December 31, 1995-2004

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Chapter 7	12,937	18,043	21,005	21,006	18,864	17,665	21,850	23,397	24,398	23,402
Chapter 11	253	292	265	189	159	172	157	182	152	107
Chapter 12	2	3	5	4	0	6	1	2	0	0
Chapter 13	3,713	4,557	5,032	4,371	4,806	4,922	4,979	5,299	5,533	5,450
TOTAL	16,905	22,895	26,307	25,570	23,829	22,765	26,987	28,880	30,083	28,959

Business and Non-Business Filings
Years Ended December 1995-2004

Year	Business	Non-Business	Year	Business	Non-Business
	Filings	Filings		Filings	Filings
2004	430	28,529	1999	312	23,517
2003	479	29,604	1998	537	25,033
2002	459	28,421	1997	866	25,441
2001	311	26,676	1996	880	22,015
2000	320	22,445	1995	901	16,004

Note: This is an amended version of the January 14, 2005 press release. The original version mislabeled the year in the table on page one as FY (fiscal year) rather than CY (calendar year). This was an error carried over from earlier years. Also, the non-business filings listed on this last page were reported as 28,959. This number was actually the total filings for the calendar year. The number of non-business filings for the calendar year is now correctly reported on this page as 28, 529.

